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Environment and sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/191 of 15 December 1998, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-fourth session on the outcome of the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, as well as on measures adopted by the Conference at that session.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/191

A. Arrangements for the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat

2. Further to the signing by the Government of Germany, the Secretary-General and the Convention secretariat on 18 August 1998, the Government of Germany issued an ordinance, which became effective on 23 October 1998, implementing major parts of the headquarters agreement under German law, and on 18 August 1998 Germany ratified the headquarters agreement.

B. Global Mechanism

3. While recognizing the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in selecting and appointing the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism as well as in establishing the framework for a separate identity for the Global Mechanism, the Conference of the Parties noted with concern that the Global Mechanism did not start operating on 1 January 1998 as requested by the Conference of the Parties at its first session.[1]

4. The Managing Director of the Global Mechanism presented the first draft of the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism. The Conference of the Parties took note

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of the draft and requested the Managing Director to complete the development of an operational strategy so as to ensure full consideration of all its main functions, including mobilizing and channelling financial resources.

5. In this regard, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Convention secretariat and the Global Mechanism to cooperate in order to avoid duplication and to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention in accordance with their respective roles as contained in the memorandum of understanding between the Conference of the Parties and IFAD regarding the modalities and administrative operation of the Global Mechanism.

6. The Conference of the Parties requested the Convention secretariat to continue consultations on the text of the draft of the memorandum of understanding in order to ensure that comments made by parties at the second session of the Conference of the Parties were taken into account, and to submit a revised draft of the memorandum of understanding for consideration and decision by the Conference of the Parties at its third session.

C. Additional regional implementation annex

7. Following the adoption by the General Assembly, at its fifty-third session, of resolution 53/191, the Conference of the Parties agreed to facilitate a consultative process for the elaboration of an additional regional implementation annex to the Convention for the countries of the Eastern and Central Europe region.

8. In this regard, countries of Eastern and Central Europe were invited to pursue consultations with a view to producing a draft additional regional implementation annex to the Convention for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its third session.

D. Action by States

9. In paragraph 3 of resolution 53/191, the General Assembly called upon all countries that were not parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

10. As of 27 April 1999, instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession had been deposited by the following 149 States and one regional economic integration organizations:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, European Community, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

III. Arrangements for the third session of the Conference of the Parties

11. The Conference of the Parties, in its decision 24/COP.2[2] accepted with gratitude the offer by the Government of Brazil to hold the third session of the Conference of the Parties in Recife from 15 to 26 November 1999.

12. The secretariat is conducting discussions with the Government of Brazil concerning the arrangements for that session. A host agreement with that Government will be signed in July 1999.

13. The annotated agenda for the third session of the Conference of the Parties is contained in document ICCD/COP (3)/1.

IV. Action requested of the General Assembly

14. The Conference of the Parties approved a revised core budget for the Convention for 1999, as the second year of the biennium 1998–1999, not including conference-servicing costs.

15. In its decision 3/COP.2,[2] the Conference of the Parties called on the General Assembly to decide to finance from the regular programme budget of the United Nations the conference-servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies for the duration of the institutional linkage approved by the General Assembly, including the fourth and fifth sessions of the Conference of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies, in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2000–2001.

16. That request is hereby conveyed to the General Assembly, and the Assembly is invited to take further action thereon at its current session.

17. It is recalled that in its resolution 52/198 the General Assembly decided to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1998–1999 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies. The servicing of those meetings was provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva at United Nations premises in Geneva during 1998 and in Bonn during 1999. The costs of the meetings were financed from the United Nations regular budget for the biennium 1998–1999.

18. It is the intention of the Secretariat to provide conference services to the Convention in the biennium 2000–2001 on a reimbursable basis, unless the General Assembly decides, at its fifty-fourth session, to endorse decision 3/COP.2 of the Conference of the Parties.

Notes

[1] ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1, decision 24/COP.1.

[2] See ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1.